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TAGS: [NATO](#) [PINS](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [BE](#) [AF](#)  
SUBJECT: NATO, AFGHANISTAN, AND BELGIUM: JUNE 10 ELECTIONS  
LIMIT SCOPE OF POSITIVE BELGIAN RESPONSE

REF: SECSTATE 71547

Classified By: DCM William Imbrie, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) In response to reftel demarche, Belgian FM De Gucht told DCM on May 30 that the June 10 federal polls limit Belgium's ability to be responsive to NATO's request. De Gucht said that while his party (the party of the Foreign and Prime Ministers) was sympathetic to the request from NATO, they are unable to take action on it pending the elections and formation of a new government.

¶2. (C) A senior aide to De Gucht told us the government has already agreed to NATO's request for Belgian Forces to remain at Kabul Airport until April 7, 2008, recently announced by Defense Minister Flahaut. The aide commented that recent suicide bombings in northern Afghanistan will make selling an expanded Belgian presence in Afghanistan even more difficult.

¶3. (C) Comment: We will keep this issue before the Belgians in the weeks ahead. DCM has demarched the Prime Minister's National Security Advisor and Ambassador will raise the issue with the Prime Minister when they meet on June 6 and we will keep this issue before senior government leaders. After elections on June 10, there will be an extended period while a new government is formed during which the caretaker government is prevented from making any new commitments. We believe that no decision on changes to Belgium's posture in ISAF will be made until a new government is in office; likely not until mid-summer. End comment. Fox  
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